

EASTHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting of Eastham Parish Council held in Eastham Memorial Hall at 7.30pm on Tuesday 26th January 2016

**Present: Cllr Arnold (Chairman), Cllr Inge (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Adams,
Cllr Horsfall, Cllr Moseley, Cllr Conway**

In Attendance: Clerk, District Cllr Caroline Palethorpe and 3 Members of the Public.

1. **Apologies:** Cllr Worsley, received and accepted.
2. **Declaration of Interests –**
 - a. Register of Interests: No changes.
 - b. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests – None.
 - c. Other Disclosable Interests – None.
3. **Dispensations –**
 - a. To consider written requests from councillors for the council to grant a dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011) –
 - b. **Dispensations requested – None.**
4. **Public Question Time –** See notes below.
5. **Minutes of last Meeting –** Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 24th November 2015 were agreed by all and signed by Chairman.
6. **District Cllrs report –** Caroline Palethorpe was welcomed to the meeting. Report at end of minutes. Vice Chairman had query regarding some planning decisions being made by Central Government, was this going to escalate in future. Dist Cllr to make enquiries at MHDC. Dist Cllr keen to promote Tenbury Transport Trust as passenger numbers are low and services will have to be reviewed if numbers do not improve.
County Cllrs report – Apologies given. Written report at end of minutes.
7. **Progress Reports for information:**
 - a. **First Aid Training –** Clerk looking at equipment that can be used with DVD that another Parish has. One resident present tonight is a trained first aider and offered to help with training sessions.
 - b. **Neighbourhood Plan (NHP) –** Chairman, Clerk and resident to attend information session on Thursday.
 - c. **Eastham Memorial Hall refurbishment –** Meeting being held with assessors in February regarding lottery funding, this report will then go to Panel in March to be accepted or refused. Other grant funding being looked at. Dist Cllr to send letter of support for rebuild of hall.
8. **Reports on Meetings attended by Clerk or Councillors:** None.
9. **Finances:**
 - a. **Payments made –** MTM Contracting Ltd (mowing Millennium Green) = £1080.00, Mr I Mapp (LM November/December 2015) = £374.40.
 - b. **Payments received –** None.
 - c. **Bank Reconciliation –** November/December 2015 signed, balance agreed as £14900.35.
 - d. **Precept 2016-17 –** Budget to 31st December 2015 circulated with draft budget for 2016-17. After discussion it was agreed to increase precept to £7150.00.
10. **Planning:**
 - a. Plans circulated since last meeting – **None.**
 - b. Decisions received since last meeting –
15/01342/FUL – Land at (Os 6557 6668), Eastham, Worcestershire – Change of use from agricultural to equestrian use, comprising hay barn/stables, and ménage and circulation area grazing horses. **Approved by MHDC.**
 - c. **15/00047/OUT Oakwood Barn, Eastham, WR15 8NN –** Outline application with all matters reserved to erect a 3 bedroom single storey residence. Outcome of Appeal lodged June 2015. **Appeal dismissed by Planning Inspector.**
 - d. Plans to comment on at this meeting –
 - e. **Oaktrees, Highwood –** Enforcement action regarding mobile caravan. MHDC have advised permission has been granted to leave the caravan onsite until 16th March 2016 to allow applicant to live onsite whilst he

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does the conversion. MHDC will review this decision in March 2016.

- f. **Temevale, Eastham** – Wooden structure in field. MHDC are seeking Legal advice.

11. Road Report:

- a. **Lengthsman** – General tidying to be maintained.
- b. **Any problems to report** – Signs need attention, drain by Astley Orchard blocked.
- c. **Update on outstanding queries** –
 - **Astley Orchard** – repairs to road – Housing Association still to do some repairs. Clerk to inform Dist. Cllr so she can look into problem.

- 12. Eastham Memorial Hall Oaktree** – Resident living by Hall had concerns regarding roots of tree disturbing pipework for their sewerage system. Clerk has contacted PC insurers, they advise it is Hall responsibility but tree survey would be needed. Clerk to write to resident. (It is known survey of tree roots will be needed if new hall built).

- 13. External Audit from 2017** – It was agreed by all not to opt out of the External Audit arrangements that are being put into place from 2017 by National Association of Local Councils and other bodies.

14. Correspondence for information:

Circulation with Clerk, list in minute's folder.

WCC Conference – 24th February – 6.30pm,

MHDC Neighbourhood Planning presentations 28th January 6-8pm,

'Clean for the Queen' January to March 2016,

Queens 90th Birthday 12th June 2016 – details to be circulated when known.

- 15. Clerks report on Urgent Decisions since last meeting** – None.

16. Councillor's reports and items for the next agenda.

Clerks Review, Neighbourhood Plan, Lengthsman Contract/Mowing Contract 2016-17.

- 17. Date of next meeting:** 29th MARCH 2016 – 7.30pm

- 18. Meeting closed 8.45pm.**

Signed----- Date 29th March 2016
Chairman

Eastham Memorial Hall – Member of Hall Committee updated Cllrs (see item 7c). New equipment purchased with small grants to improve facilities. Other grants being looked into.

Footpaths – Jen Jones volunteered to be Footpath Officer for Parish. Clerk to forward training details.

District Councillor Report

Syrian Refugees - This has been a rather contentious issue in Malvern. The matter has now been resolved and has resulted in proceeding with a bid to the Home Office by Worcestershire Councils to re-house Syrian refugees in Worcestershire. The problem has been funding for years 2 to 5 of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme but clarification has now been received. No date for their arrival has been set but it is anticipated that up to 50 people will be resettled in Worcestershire by the end of the year. Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership along with representatives from the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership and the Home Office together with Housing Portfolio holders are meeting end of January to progress the scheme.

Homelessness - Together with other district councils MHDC have been working with WCC to accept a delegation of funding to commission a Single Person and Childless Couples Homeless Prevention Support Service. This service has to be up and running by April 1st with a tight procurement process.

Housing and Planning Bill - The Government has made a late amendment to this Bill during its third reading to allow alternative providers to handle planning applications. This would allow "designated persons" to handle applications as well as the local planning authority with the aim of making the service more efficient and less costly. The Secretary of State will have the ability to decide when and where to set up such pilot projects. The actual determination of planning applications would remain with local planning authorities.

Portfolio Holders - Changes have been made to the titles and responsibilities of MHDC's Portfolio Holders as follows; Leader of the Council & Economic Development – Phil Grove,
Deputy Leader of the Council & Environment – Bronwen Behan, Policy, Localism and HR – David Chambers, Finance – Paul Cumming, Healthier Communities – David Watkins,
Sustainable Development and Infrastructure – Melanie Baker

Legal Services - Further moves to reduce costs have resulted in the establishment of shared Legal Services for MHDC and Wychavon. The team will be based at the Council House, Malvern.

Meet Your Council - A programme of Meet Your Council events will be held during February and March. These will take place in the Link, Chase, Tenbury and Woodbury wards. The aim is to hold at least three per quarter. It is a useful alternative from surgeries by local councillors giving them the opportunity to listen to any issues, concerns or indeed praises about local areas.

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COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

- 1. Happy New Year** - I would like to wish all parish councillors, and your hard working clerk, a very Happy and Prosperous New Year. We can look forward to 2016 with a degree of optimism with the economy in reasonable shape, unemployment steadily declining and there being the possibility of some improvement in our relationship with the EU. Sadly, you will also have heard of the resignation of the council leader, Adrian Hardman, after he failed a breath test, he was banned from driving for 16 months. I would also like to pay tribute to Adrian for his exemplary leadership over the last five years, and in particular his careful management of the County Council's finances, a job for which he was responsible before the additional burden of the leadership. On January 14th Simon Geraghty, the former deputy, was elected as leader, with Anthony Blagg as his deputy. Simon has taken over Adrian's portfolio in charge of Finance, and he has asked me to assume his former portfolio of Economy, Skills and Infrastructure. All other Cabinet posts remain the same.
- 2. Review of the WCC budget** - The local government financial settlement came in late in December and has been factored in to the Council Tax assessment for 2016/17. You will know that the Chancellor has given Counties the responsibility for increasing the budget for Adult Social Care by allowing a 2% increase in addition to any other tax increase the County might be contemplating. This allows for local fund raising to reflect local need, rather than a blanket demand from all areas. In our case, the full 2% will be raised, given the increasing percentage of our population over the age of 75, coupled with a 3.7% drop in the percentage in the under 25 age group. This will be added to the 1.94% increase in Council Tax, to cover all the other needs of the budget, in particular increasing numbers of children being taken into care and the commitment to maintain and improve the condition of our roads. Despite this increase, Worcestershire will remain in the bottom quartile of counties, in terms of its council tax. You will also remember that the County is third in the country in terms of productivity growth behind Oxford and London. We aim to see that this situation is maintained or improved by the economic policies adopted by the County and the LEP.
- 3. Flooding** - In the recent period of heavy rain, we have been fortunate not to have suffered any serious flooding. You may have been aware of two places locally where flooding of roads extended over at least half the carriageway, on the A443 in Eardiston and to the east of Great Witley. The former was caused by a blocked gully, and I have recommended that the cause be investigated and the utility company responsible for letting the grit and dirt into the gully during the recent works be reprimanded. Should any of you know of such repeated flooding events, please report them on the WCC website and, if you can, let me know as well, so I can add a second line of pressure to seek resolution. Some of you may be persuaded by certain sections of the media to believe the current weather extremes are related to concern about climate change. The Met Office are guilty of playing along with the current belief that matters are getting worse. They are fond of quoting UK records that only go back to 1910, while they also have records for England and Wales that go back to 1766 and they show the wettest December was 1876. That could not be reasonably attributed to recent industrialisation and the use of fossil fuels, whatever the COP21 meeting in Paris has concluded.* You may be interested in taking part in the consultation currently in progress on the latest Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, 2015 - 2021. This is undertaken by the County Council as the Local Lead Flood Authority. That means the County has a responsibility to see that adequate precautions are taken. The consultation period ends on the 29th February and I would urge those who have a particular interest of concern about flooding to read and comment on the plans.
- 4. Potholes** - One of the regrettable results of the recent excessive rainfall is the proliferation of potholes. These can cause a lot of damage and distress, and I would request all Cllrs and others to report them as soon as practicable. The WCC online reporting system is now pretty easy to use, and will result in the most rapid response. Having said that, I am very happy to hear of any such problems and will do my best to see that action is taken quickly and effectively.
- 5. Street lighting in Tenbury Wells** - Tenbury will soon be subject to the partial night time switching off of street lights between midnight and 06.00am and affect two out of every three lights in the town. Major routes and important junctions are excluded in the interests of road safety. In other areas, there has been concern expressed about the safety of citizens under this scheme and others have been concerned about road safety. The County is reassured by the police's evidence that neither of these perceptions is upheld in practice. We may expect to see the adjustments being implemented in the next couple of weeks. While I have been at pains to reassure residents that there should be no increase in crime or any reduction in pedestrian safety, the County officers will be monitoring the situation and will be willing to respond positively to any specific suggestions for improvement. I would be grateful if any problems can also be forwarded to me.
- 6. Rhyse Lane** - Now that the drainage and resurfacing work has been completed in Rhyse Lane, near Eastham, the lane should at last be in good condition for the whole of its length.

Cllr Ken Pollock, Martley, Worcester, WR6 6QA

*: For those interested in reading more on this, I can recommend the blog written by Paul Homewood under the title "Not a Lot of People Know That". He publicises Met Office records that otherwise seem beyond the reach of journalists and the Met Office itself!